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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Venezuela

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DATE DISTR. 5 April 1950

SUBJECT Strike in Shell Oilfields of Casigua

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ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

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(LISTED BELOW)SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. On 30 March 1950 a general work stoppage broke out in the Shell Company oil-field at Casigua, State of Falcon, Venezuela, as a result of the circulation of a strike notice which was signed by the "Comite de Huelga". Of approximately 500 workers in Casigua, only some 100 were left on the job to maintain regular oil production, power, water, commissary, hospital, and other basic services.
2. The government dispatched a Sub-Inspector of Labor with one National Guard officer via a Shell Company plane to the area to persuade the strikers to return to work. The president of the one labor syndicate in Casigua, the UTC, which is blue and composed of both Communists and former Accion Democratica elements, was found in hiding. In the presence of the National Guard officer, he instructed individual workers as they received their pay envelopes on 31 March to be back at work on 1 April. In spite of his instructions, however, only employees in strategic services such as telephone, light, water, and pump stations reported for work.
3. An official of the government toured the residential sections by automobile and encouraged the workers by means of loud speakers to go back to work. Two government planes circulated above the Casigua area early Saturday dropping handbills which stated that there was no national strike and admonished workers to return to their jobs. Workers reportedly gathered up these notices and burned them. As of 1 April there were about 15 Guardamon in the area and the government was reported to be sending in an additional twenty.
4. Many of the workers made it known that they would not go back to work until they were personally instructed to do so by their leaders in Caracas or Maracaibo.
5. The directorate of the UTC, except for the president, who is being held by the National Guard, is in hiding.
6. While rumors of a strike set for 3 or 4 April persist in the Bolivar District, there has been no evidence to support them and no reason up to 2 April to believe that the Casigua strike would spread. Maracaibo, the Bolivar District, and the West Lake area were completely normal as of 2 April with no strike incidents reported. The National Guard has mobile units on the alert and reinforcements can be rushed into the area at the slightest indication of trouble. Agitators were being picked up and held by the police on 2 April.

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[REDACTED] Comment. It is of interest that the red syndicate headquarters in Cabimas and other syndicate locals have been padlocked by the government, while the blue or white headquarters has been allowed to remain open, although all syndicate activities have been prohibited by the government.

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